

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 31, 2011

## **ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT ANNOUNCES NEW PUBLIC DOMAIN CITATION SYSTEM, ENDING ERA OF PRINTED VOLUMES**

In another bow to the digital age, those bulky law books containing officially reported Illinois court opinions soon will be going the way of 8-track tapes and boom boxes.

The Illinois Supreme Court announced Tuesday a new way of officially citing its cases and those of the Illinois Appellate Court. This new method will eliminate the need to contractually publish and purchase the official opinions in bound volumes. It will save Illinois taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

Illinois will join about a dozen other states who already use the new method of case citation. The Supreme Court promulgated the changes in amendments filed Tuesday to Supreme Court Rule 6 and Rule 23.

“The changes are reflective of the way we all live and the way the practice of law is changing,” said Chief Justice Thomas L. Kilbride. “So much legal research is now done online through references and sources available on the Internet and even on smartphones that it makes the publication and purchase of official printed volumes unnecessary and a waste of money and resources.

“The official body of Illinois court opinions will now reside on the website of the Illinois Supreme Court, readily available to lawyers, judges and law clerks for official citation and to any member of the public who wishes to read them.”

The changes are part of a movement by the Supreme Court under the tenure of Chief Justice Kilbride and his predecessors to integrate electronic technology with a goal of achieving greater court transparency and efficiency. The Illinois Supreme Court was one of the first to incorporate Twitter in publicizing announcements and was also among the early few to make available video and audio recordings of its oral arguments the same day they occur before the Court. The audio of all Appellate Court arguments is also available on the Court’s website at [www.state.il.us/court](http://www.state.il.us/court).

**MORE**

## **New Era Add One**

The changes in citation will be overseen by the Supreme Court Reporter of Decisions, Brian Ervin. The new method of citation goes into effect July 1, 2011. The current contract for printing the advance sheets and bound volumes of Illinois court opinions expires July 31, 2011 and will not be renewed.

The taxpayer money saved stems from the hundreds of volumes that will no longer be purchased for Illinois judges and court libraries.

The changes mark an end to an era dating to 1831 when the first official volume of Illinois Reports was published. At the time, roads in Illinois were virtually non-existent. The Cumberland Road stopped at the Ohio River.

“This is simply an acknowledgment that electronic research dominates in the practice of law today,” said Chief Justice Kilbride. “Today an attorney can search the name of a case on a computer and read that opinion in a matter of seconds, even from a smartphone, e-reader or e-pad. A lack of printed law reports is no longer a hindrance to legal research.”

The official citation of cases is indispensable to the research and practice of law. The citation of a case serves as its unique identifier. Historically, cases have been published in printed volumes of books called case reporters. The citation has consisted of a volume number, the case name, the beginning page of the case as it appears in the reporter and year of filing. To indicate a specific passage in the case, a pinpoint page number also is included in the citation.

In Illinois, citations are now made to the state’s printed official reporters: “Illinois Reports” for Supreme Court opinions and “Illinois Appellate Reports” for Appellate Court opinions. An example of a specific passage in a 1985 Supreme Court case looks like this: *Daley v. Laurie*, 106 Ill. 2d 33, 37 (1985). The case also may be cited in an appropriate regional reporter published by West Publishing Co. A parallel citation for an Illinois case would be contained in West’s North East Reporter and West’s Illinois Decisions.

Reliance on printed reports for access to the courts’ opinions has diminished with the rise of electronic databases, such as those found on the Court’s own internet website at [www.state.il.us/court](http://www.state.il.us/court), Westlaw and Lexis-Nexis.

In Illinois, Supreme Court and Appellate Court opinions have been available on the judiciary’s web site since 1996, but the requirement that official citation be made to printed reporters has prevented the direct citation of those opinions. That changes with the amendments to Supreme Court Rule 6, Supreme Court Rule 23 and an administrative order in relation to Rule 23.

## MORE

### New Era Add Two

These changes direct the Illinois Supreme Court and the Illinois Appellate Court to assign at the time of filing a public-domain case designator number, as well as internal paragraph numbers to all opinions and Rule 23 orders filed after July 1, 2011. While the rule changes require official citation to the public-domain numbering and paragraph scheme, they continue to allow parallel citations to the unofficial regional reporters such as the North East Reporter and Illinois Decisions.

An example of a Supreme Court citation under the new system would look like this: *People v Doe*, 2011 IL 102345, ¶15. This shows the name of the case, 2011 as the year of decision, the Illinois Supreme Court as the court of decision, 102345 as the court-assigned identifier number which is the docket number of the case and a pinpoint reference to the 15<sup>th</sup> paragraph in the opinion.

An example of an Appellate Court decision from the Third Judicial District would look like this: *People v. Doe*, 2011 IL App (3d), 101234, ¶15. In the Appellate Court, the unique identifier number would consist of the last six digits of the docket number.

Unpublished orders filed under Supreme Court Rule 23 will have the letter “U” appended to the unique-identifier number. Rule 23 orders will still be posted to the Court’s web site.

The public domain citation system was first recommended by the American Association of Law Librarians in 1994 and was endorsed by the American Bar Association in 1995. Since then, about a dozen states have adopted it.

–30–

**(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, press secretary to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.2323)**